

# BRFSS Brief

Number 2020-03

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual statewide telephone survey of adults developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by the New York State Department of Health. The BRFSS is designed to provide information on behaviors, risk factors, and utilization of preventive services related to the leading causes of chronic and infectious diseases, disability, injury, and death among the noninstitutionalized, civilian population aged 18 years and older.

## Overweight and Obesity

New York State Adults, 2018

### Introduction and Key Findings

Obesity and overweight are currently the second leading cause of preventable death in the United States (US) and may soon overtake tobacco as the leading preventable cause of death.<sup>1,2</sup> By the year 2050, obesity is predicted to shorten life expectancy in the US by 2-5 years.<sup>3</sup> Obesity is a significant risk factor for many chronic diseases and conditions including type 2 diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke, heart disease, certain types of cancer, psychosocial problems, and osteoarthritis.<sup>4-8</sup> Increasingly, these conditions are being seen in children and adolescents.<sup>9,10</sup> New York State (NYS) ranks second among states in medical expenditures attributable to obesity at \$11.1 billion.<sup>11</sup>

Creating community environments that support healthy food and beverage choices and safe and accessible physical activity opportunities is a major goal in the effort to prevent and reduce the burden of chronic diseases and a focus of the New York State Prevention Agenda 2019-2024. Maintaining healthy weight should start in early childhood and continue throughout adulthood.

### Key Findings

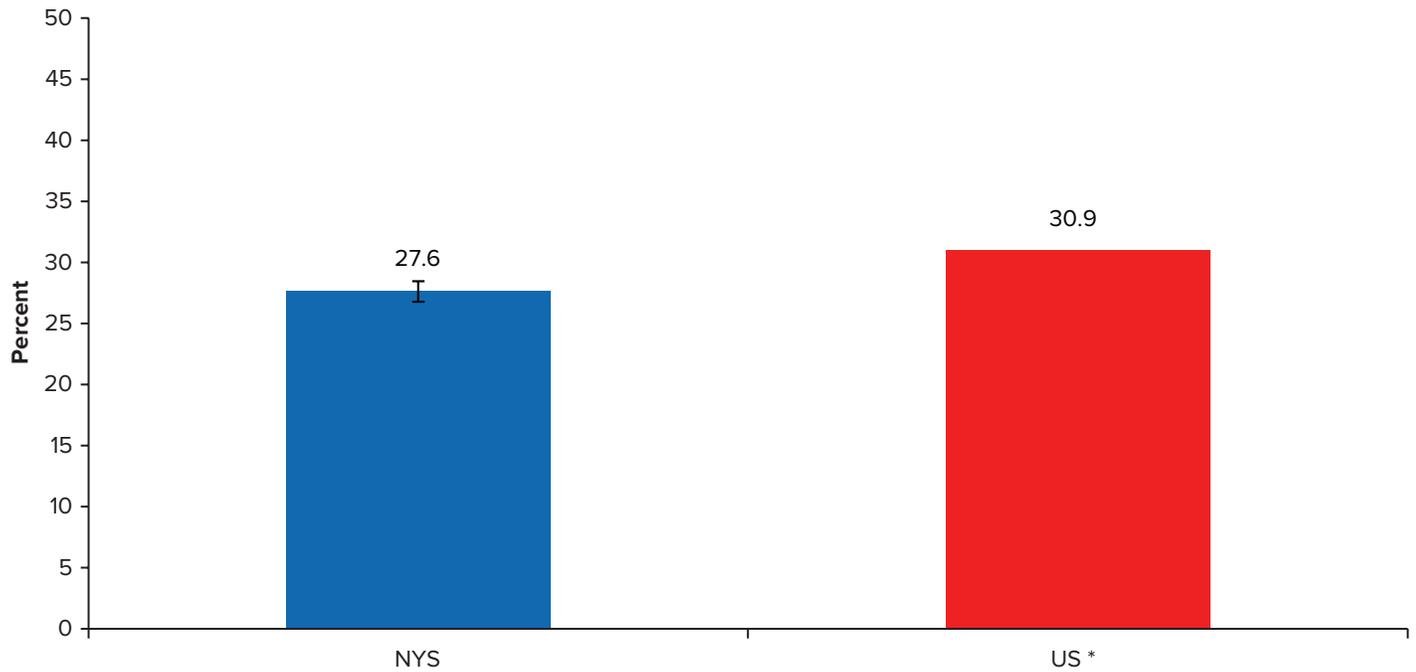
More than one-quarter (27.6%) of adults in New York State (NYS) have obesity and another 35.1% have overweight; these two conditions affect over 8.7 million people in NYS. The prevalence of obesity in NYS is higher among adults who are non-Hispanic black or Hispanic (33.1% and 31.4%, respectively), are currently living with disability (36.7%), and those who live in the region outside of New York City (29.1%). Obesity is less prevalent among adults who earn an annual household income of at least \$50,000 (25.8%), and those with a college degree (22.1%).

### BRFSS questions

1. About how much do you weigh without shoes?
2. About how tall are you without shoes?

Weight and height responses were used to determine body mass index (BMI), calculated as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. Respondents were classified as overweight if their BMI was equal to or greater than 25.0, but less than 30.0. They were classified as obese if their BMI was 30.0 or greater.

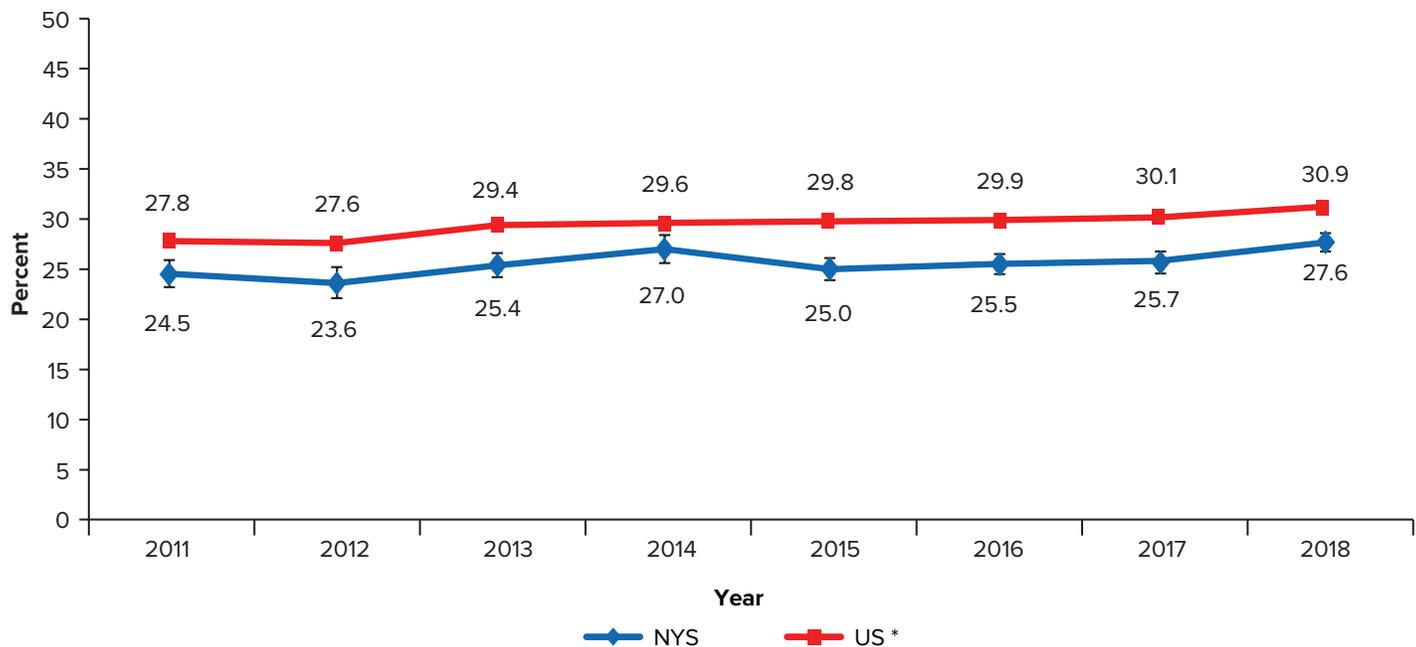
**Figure 1. Obesity among US and New York State adults, BRFSS 2018**



\*Median percent; includes data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

**Figure 2. Prevalence of obesity among US and New York State adults, by BRFSS survey year**



\*Median percent; includes data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

## Overweight and obesity<sup>a</sup> among New York State adults, 2018 BRFSS

	Neither overweight nor obese		Overweight <sup>b</sup>		Obese <sup>c</sup>	
	% <sup>d</sup>	95% CI <sup>d</sup>	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
<b>New York State (NYS)</b> [n=35,767]	37.3	36.3 - 38.3	35.1	34.1 - 36.1	27.6	26.7 - 28.5
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	31.3	30.0 - 32.7	40.7	39.3 - 42.1	27.9	26.7 - 29.2
Female	43.2	41.7 - 44.6	29.6	28.2 - 30.9	27.3	26.0 - 28.6
<b>Age (years)</b>						
18-24	58.8	55.5 - 62.0	23.3	20.5 - 26.0	18.0	15.5 - 20.5
25-34	40.9	38.4 - 43.4	33.9	31.5 - 36.3	25.3	23.0 - 27.5
35-44	35.3	32.8 - 37.9	34.1	31.5 - 36.6	30.6	28.3 - 32.9
45-54	29.9	27.6 - 32.2	36.6	34.2 - 39.0	33.5	31.2 - 35.9
55-64	29.7	27.5 - 31.8	39.1	36.8 - 41.4	31.2	29.1 - 33.4
65+	33.9	31.8 - 35.9	39.1	37.0 - 41.3	27.0	25.1 - 29.0
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
White non-Hispanic	38.1	36.9 - 39.3	34.5	33.3 - 35.6	27.4	26.4 - 28.5
Black non-Hispanic	31.9	29.2 - 34.6	35.0	32.2 - 37.8	33.1	30.4 - 35.8
Hispanic	29.6	27.1 - 32.1	39.0	36.2 - 41.8	31.4	28.8 - 34.0
Other non-Hispanic	52.3	48.4 - 56.2	31.9	28.3 - 35.6	15.8	13.0 - 18.5
<b>Income</b>						
<\$25,000	34.2	32.0 - 36.4	34.0	31.8 - 36.2	31.8	29.7 - 33.9
\$25,000-\$49,999	34.5	32.1 - 36.9	34.6	32.3 - 37.0	30.8	28.6 - 33.1
\$50,000 and greater	38.3	36.8 - 39.8	35.9	34.5 - 37.3	25.8	24.5 - 27.1
Missing <sup>e</sup>	40.6	38.1 - 43.0	34.7	32.3 - 37.1	24.7	22.6 - 26.9
<b>Educational attainment</b>						
Less than high school (HS)	30.2	27.0 - 33.3	38.2	34.8 - 41.7	31.6	28.4 - 34.8
High school or GED	33.7	31.8 - 35.7	35.0	33.1 - 37.0	31.2	29.4 - 33.1
Some post-HS	37.2	35.2 - 39.1	33.8	31.9 - 35.7	29.0	27.3 - 30.8
College graduate	43.0	41.5 - 44.6	34.9	33.5 - 36.3	22.1	20.8 - 23.3
<b>Disability<sup>f</sup></b>						
Yes	31.1	29.1 - 33.1	32.2	30.3 - 34.1	36.7	34.7 - 38.7
No	39.4	38.3 - 40.6	36.0	34.8 - 37.2	24.6	23.5 - 25.6
<b>Region</b>						
New York City (NYC)	39.4	37.6 - 41.1	35.0	33.3 - 36.7	25.6	24.1 - 27.2
NYS exclusive of NYC	35.8	34.6 - 36.9	35.1	34.0 - 36.3	29.1	28.0 - 30.2

a Based on categories of body mass index (BMI), calculated as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters

b Overweight, 25.0≤BMI<30.0

c Obese, BMI≥30.0

d % = weighted percentage; CI = confidence interval.

e "Missing" category included because more than 10% of the sample did not report income.

f All respondents who reported having at least one type of disability (cognitive, mobility, vision, self-care, independent living or deafness)

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## Program Contributions

New York State Department of Health  
Bureau of Chronic Disease Evaluation and Research  
Bureau of Community Chronic Disease Prevention

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